Newsletter of the Birdwatchers' Society of Andhra Pradesh
New Series Volume 14 Number 1 January 2017

FIELD OUTING: To ensure that we are able to catch the migrants, both of wetland and forest type, we usually have more than one birding trip during the winter months. January is also the month for the Annual Waterfowl Census (AWC). Therefore, the following field trips are planned:

Sunday, 8th January 2017: Fox Sagar & Shamirpet Lake. Meeting point: Punjagutta Cross-roads, 6.15AM; Fox Sagar, 7.00AM.

Sunday, 22nd January 2017: Manjeera Barrage. Meeting point: Punjagutta Cross-roads, 6.15AM; Manjeera Barrage, 7.00AM.

Both trips will be half-day trips. Carry snacks and water as usual. For further details and to co-ordinate, please contact Ms Surekha Aitabathula (99490-38532).

INDOOR MEETING: LIFE OF BIRDS Episode-1: To Fly Or Not To Fly
Thursday, 12th January 2017, 6.00PM: Hamburg Hall, Goethe-zentrum Hyderabad, 20 Journalist's Colony, Road No. 3, Banjara Hills, Hyderabad – 500 034. (For directions, please contact 94905-09251 or 040-65526443/23350040)

With commentary by the world-famous Sir David Attenborough, this interesting BBC documentary series describes various aspects of the life of birds. This time we screen the first episode of the wonderful series.

Mangalajodi – A Paradise of Wetland Birds

Text & photos: Sudipta Bhattacharya

Northern Pintail (male)

There are many interesting places in Orissa that attract millions of tourists across the world. Mangalajodi is one such jewel of Orissa, popularly known for Eco-Tourism. This is a paradise for wetland birds. There are more than 200 species of birds as claimed by Orissa Govt. It is located in the north-eastern part of the famous Chilika Lake.

The place has a shallow and marshy water body, which is an ideal residence for waterfowl. The half-drenched grassland is a huge source of natural food for different bird species. It is learned from the locals that this is a permanent residence for around 150000 birds; in peak season the number doubles. The migratory birds are visible in winter which starts from mid-October.

Large-scale poaching was a common threat to the avian population. Alternate means of livelihood for the families was started in 1996-1997 by Mr. Nanda Kishor Bhujabal and the members of Wild Orissa, an organization working on wildlife conservation issues. Poachers became protectors and were made members of this *Samiti* (committee). The members of the committee carry out daily surveillance and patrolling in the whole area. The Orissa Wildlife Department also chipped in by providing seasonal employment to some *Samiti* members. The *Samiti* provides small wooden boats for patrolling, monitoring and carrying tourists and birdwatchers deep into the wetland. Chilika Development Authority funds this conservation initiative.

Black-tailed Godwit

From January onwards the Ruddy-breasted Crakes (*Porzana fusca*), the Baillon's Crakes (*Porzana pusilla*), the Slaty-breasted Rails (*Gallirallus striatus*) and the Greater Painted-snipes (*Rostratula benghalensis*) start showing up; Black-tailed Godwits (*Limosa limosa*), Oriental Pratincoles (*Glareola maldivarum*) and Pacific Golden Plovers (*Pluvialis fulva*) with their breeding plumages appear by April, and in May one can see the largest congregations of Glossy Ibis (*Plegadis falcinellus*) and Fulvous Whistling-ducks (*Dendrocygna bicolor*).

Mangalajodi has been my learning ground. I learned that there are several people from Kolkata travelling to Mangalajodi, and experiencing something new each time. They travel in different seasons to experience and study different birds.

In January 2016, we started our journey from Barkul at around 7:30 am. Barkul is a famous tourist spot located at the western fringe of Chilika Lake just 44 km from Mangalajodi. We were informed that food and water was not available at Mangalajodi, so, we had to start after breakfast. On a family trip, the hardcore birders and photographers have to compromise on their desire to bird. As I too was with my family, initially, I was a little frustrated due to the late start, but after reaching Mangalajodi, it was like a miracle.

Grey-headed Lapwing

It was an amazing sight as the wetlands began to fill up with lakhs of Ruffs, Godwits, Plovers, Sandpipers and migratory ducks; the Peregrine Falcon (*Falco peregrinus*) perched exactly at the same point on the mud bund as it had done the previous year; while the Bluethroat (*Luscinia svecica*) could have perched on your brown shoe if you sat motionless long enough.

Thousands of the rarer Grey-headed Lapwings (*Vanellus cinereus*) took off while hundreds of Gulls sat motionless three metres from the boat, nonchalant, as if they were roadside spectators watching a parade. The famous take-offs by the Northern Pintails (*Anas acuta*) and the colourful Ruddy Shelducks (*Tadorna ferruginea*) were a birder's delight. The Whiskered Terns (*Chlidonias hybrida*) readily obliged the photographers with their gracious poses while the River Terns (*Sterna aurantia*) allowed us to observe them closely and at a flight speed that allowed the photographer to focus without trouble.

Ruddy Shelduck

River Tern

On the way to the eco-tourism spot from Mangalajodi village we spotted Asian Openbills (*Anastomus oscitans*) and Grey-headed Lapwings at a distance of barely ten feet from the car.

Asian Openbill

The spot where the Orissa Forest Department staff took charge of us was a small marshy jetty. We entered into a covered boat arranged for bird watchers and photographers separately. I occupied the photographers' seat leaving my family to become birdwatchers. Soon, the boat started moving steadily through the narrow water channels.

Purple Swamphens (*Porphyrio porphyrio*) and Black-Tailed Godwits were aplenty just like our crows and pigeons in Hyderabad. My large lens could barely cover the whole body of the birds.

Purple Swamphen

A Warbler was frisking between the large grasses, not allowing me to identify it; this was later identified as the Clamorous Reed Warbler.

Clamorous Reed Warbler

We noticed Greater Painted-snipes fighting in the bush, marking their territory. The Indian Moorhens (*Gallinula chloropus*) were floating around our boat.

Indian Moorhen

My family was enjoying the sight of the Black-winged Stilt (*Himantopus himantopus*) resting on a single leg. Suddenly a Pied Starling (*Gracupica contra*) was visible close to our boat.

Black-winged Stilt

The first duck sighted was a Northern Pintail. There were hundreds of Northern Pintails, Ruddy Shelducks, Northern Shovelers (*Anas clypeata*) and Garganey (*Anas querquedula*).

Northern Shoveler

Garganey (female)

The competition among the Terns for fish was a great moment, and capturing the flight shots at ground level was really enjoyable.

Terns fighting for fish

Travelling from Hyderabad to Mangalajodi is very convenient. All the trains bound to Howrah or Bhubaneswar stop at Balugaon. Mangalajodi is just 50 km from Balugaon. There are cottages in Barkul as well as Mangalajodi. The Barkul cottages are well maintained by Orissa Tourism. The Mangalajodi cottages are a bit challenging as they are maintained by local cooperatives.

Other birds sighted in significant numbers are listed below:

1. Marsh Sandpiper
2. Common Sandpiper
3. Little Stint
4. Common Redshank
5. Wood Sandpiper
6. Common Sandpiper
7. Great Egret
8. Grey Heron
9. Purple Heron
10. Pheasant-tailed Jacana
11. Black-headed Ibis
12. Glossy Ibis
13. Red-naped Ibis
14. Indian Cormorant
15. Little Cormorant
16. Little Grebe
17. Common Kingfisher
18. Bluethroat

Mangalajodi is not only a paradise for birds but also for birders and bird photographers. The list is somewhat limited as my primary focus was on photographing the birds and their actions. The total program was ideal for bird photography as the camera was set at the water level. A few of the moments that I could capture are given below:

Greater Painted-snipe (female)

Greater Painted-snipe (male)

Little Cormorant

Grey Heron

Marsh Sandpiper

Purple Heron

Common Redshank

Wood Sandpiper

Pheasant-tailed Jacana

Barn Swallow

* * *

Trip Report: BSAP Field Trip to Cherlapally Lake, 18th December 2016

Humayun Taher

Photo: Sudipta Bhattacharya

It had been some little time since I had been out with the BSAP on a field trip so I wasn't going to let this opportunity slip. Cherlapally has been a rather interesting destination in the past and, now that the winter migrants were in, it could be expected to give us a decent bag of species. So I thought and I made haste to sign up for the trip. There was also a promise of something more on this trip, as one of our members was bringing in some school students for a morning field session. One convert, of course, is worth more than a dozen saints, so this was definitely something that could be fruitful.

Picking up Shafaatsaab in the morning, I reached our Punjagutta rendezvous in good time. The early morning nip was a little in abeyance on this day, but still it was very pleasant. A few more members joined up and we started out for the location. Taking a couple of incorrect turnings, we had to stop and ask for directions… a proceeding which completely stumped us when our informant asked us which Cherlapally we were looking for. We eventually took refuge in Google maps and were successfully led to the lake by the very pleasant feminine voice which slowly and carefully spells out the directions on this most excellent app. What a boon this has been to the directionless birding community!

The school students had arrived before us and, as we parked the cars and started to unpack our binoculars and spotting scope, our most energetic Shafaatsaab started proceedings by addressing the students about birds and birding in general. Professor Moorty then took over the class and soon all the students were peering through binoculars and cameras at the birds around. I was most interested to see a solitary Brown Shrike (*Lanius cristatus*) sitting composedly on a scrubby little tree on the shores of the lake. This is one of the early migrants and I have regular records from this location, so it is possible that this is the same bird that I had seen in the previous years too. How I wish there was some way to colour tag the birds we see; it would add so much interest to the sightings of the migrants.

Cattle Egret (Photo: Sudipta Bhattacharya)

Indian Pond Heron (Photo: Sudipta Bhattacharya)

Scanning the lake, we were in for a disappointment. There seemed to be very little on the waters. Pollution had taken hold here and the ubiquitous water hyacinth was flourishing in the shallows. Fish seemed to be in good supply, and the Large Cormorants were doing themselves rather well. The presence of numerous Cattle Egrets (*Bubulcus ibis*), Indian Pond (*Ardeola grayii*), Grey (*Ardea cinerea*) and Purple Herons (*Ardea purpurea*) and a few Little Cormorants (*Phalacrocorax niger*) also showed this to be so. The water, though somewhat inky in colour, did show a fair number of small fry coming up to the surface and creating scaly patterns on the surface. I was reminded of my last trip to this lake, when I had occasion to remark on this singular phenomenon of the fish coming out of the water to breathe; it seemed that conditions had either not improved here, or else the fish in question were a species that are used to taking their air from the open and not through the water.

Purple (L) and Grey Heron (R) (Photo: Sudipta Bhattacharya)

I was further dismayed to note that the lake now has become a sort of fish pond for the local folk. Nets are stretched across the lake in all directions and there are also a couple of fisherfolk out on boats and taking up the catch. A thriving market is to be seen on the shores where the fresh-caught fish are being sold. I am not unduly critical of such a proceeding as I have ample proof that this sort of activity actually helps the lake to survive. When the lake is a source of livelihood, the local people will take care of it. They may chase away the birds, and the nets definitely will take a toll of a few cormorants and coots, but in the long run, the survival of the lake will be assured.

This is the sort of thing that conservationists these days need to keep in mind. It is all very well to say that the place is a haven for birds so let's protect it, but people seem not to realise that the reason the place is a haven is because of the large supply of fish in the lake. This is the reason why I was against the old Ameenpur Lake being turned into a biodiversity preserve. What was needed there was sturdy common sense and the setting up of a community reserve that would benefit the fishermen, not the birds. By protecting the activities of the fishermen, better results would have been obtained in the matter of preserving the habitat, which would have also helped the bird populations. Habitat and food are the prime factors affecting bird populations and protection of the one assures the other.

Indian Roller (Photo: Humayun Taher)

The students continued to exclaim at the activities and variety of species to be seen around. Under the able guidance of the good professor we all set off along the shores and on to the bund. A pair of White-browed Wagtails (*Motacilla maderaspatensis*) stared at us in horror and made haste to be elsewhere.

Ashwin caught a fleeting glimpse of a Yellow Bittern (*Ixobrychus sinensis*), which was just as retiring as the Wagtails and wanted nothing to do with us. The Pond Herons and Cattle Egrets, on the other hand, were busy victualling up in the shallows and the hyacinth beds, and could not be bothered with the group on the shore. They believed in getting theirs and to hell with what it does to their figures!

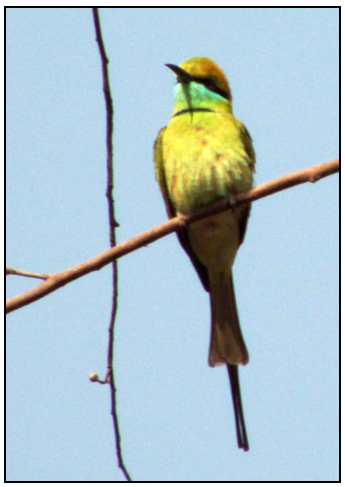
Yellow Bittern (Photo: Humayun Taher)

The large schools of fish that could be seen frequently popping their heads out of the waters had a lot to contend with. Not only the herons and egrets, they also needed to keep an eye on the splendid and graceful River Terns (*Sterna aurantia*) floating around. One enterprising Tern decided to try wading, but was quite unsuccessful: Methinks it should stick to angling! Grey Herons were also to be seen making a decent catch of piscatorial delicacies, and no doubt there was enough there for all.

Clamorous Reed Warbler (Photo: Humayun Taher)

Walking along the bund, we saw both species of Reed Warbler (Clamorous and Blyth's – *Acrocephalus stentoreus* and *Acrocephalus dumetorum*) and also the little Ashy Prinias (*Prinia socialis*). The rich yellow-orange colour of the underparts of these little birds showed that the breeding season was nigh upon them and they were hard at work. A pair of Red-vented Bulbuls (*Pycnonotus cafer*) also seemed to be thinking of setting up house together. I saw one carrying a twig in its mouth and diving into a peculiarly dense shrubbery. No doubt there was a nest in the making here.

Black Drongo (Photo: Humayun Taher)



Green Bee-eater
(Photo: Humayun Taher)

Black Drongos (*Dicrurus macrocercus*) were also on the wing, and Green Bee-eaters (*Merops orientalis*) were to be seen cheerfully hawking insects. One was using the telegraph wires from which to make its forays, and these wires are low enough for all of us to get a brilliant view of the bird as it sailed out, snapped up a passing bee and glided back to the wire to dispose of its catch. Occasionally, we could hear it twittering away triumphantly, the sound somewhat muffled by the large insect it held in its beak!

About midway along the bund was a temple, the flat terrace of which made a capital place to set up the spotting scope and peer all around to see whether there were any sights we had missed out. I did a sweep of the lake and regretfully noted that there are no waders and no ducks in residence at the moment. The students then took over the instrument and were soon peering through it at distant spots on the far shore where a few more egrets and herons were to be seen.

Lawrence led a particularly energetic group of students down towards the fields on the far side of the bund, where they put up a Common Snipe (*Gallinago gallinago*) and disturbed a White-breasted Waterhen (*Amaurornis phoenicurus*), which took to its heels, voicing its harsh booming call in disapproval of this unwarranted intrusion.

The keen eyes of the students spotted a small pod of Coots floating about in the water; but apart from these, there was a singular lack of bird-life in the area. I reflected that one reason could have been the size of the group, but it is also to be expected that with the unseasonal heavy rains that lashed the state a couple of months ago, it is all too probable that the small lakes and ponds that were dry last year, were now full, and the migrants may well have scattered to these small refuges.

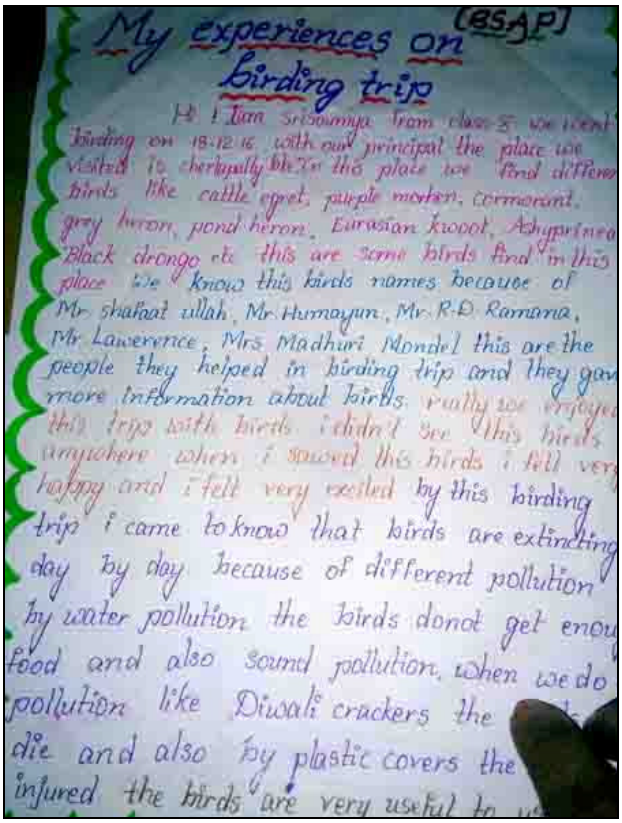
Still, a list of about 45 species was quite good going and so, well content, we repaired to the cars for breakfast. Shafaatsaab opened up shop with some of the students who were all eagerness to enroll in the Society, which was an encouraging way to end the trip; we don't often get as many as 6 memberships in a single day. Rounding off the snacks with a well-earned cup of the vital bohea, it was time to head back, well-content with the sightings of the early winter morning.

Great Cormorant (Photo: Sudipta Bhattacharya)

The full list of species seen is given below:

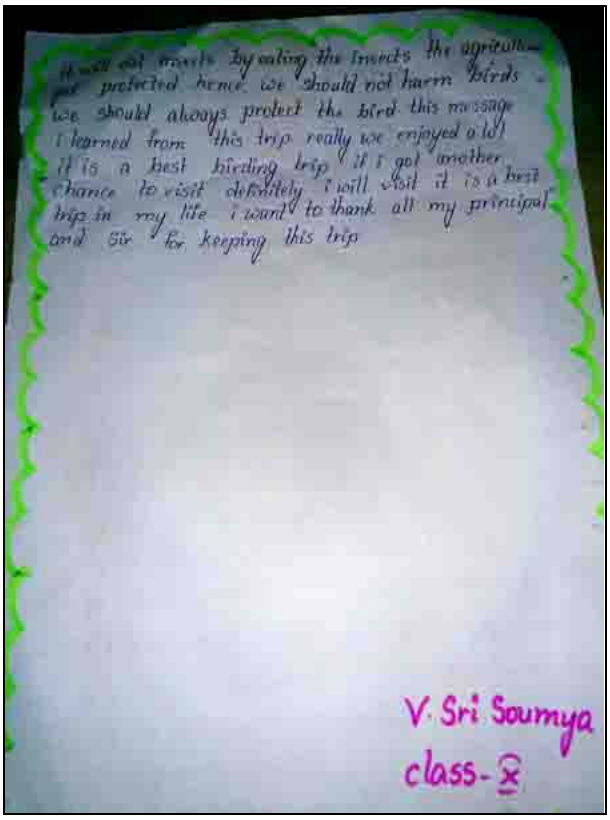
Sl. No.	Species	Scientific Name	Sl. No.	Species	Scientific Name
1	Little Cormorant	*Phalacrocorax niger*	24	White-breasted Kingfisher	*Halcyon smyrnensis*
2	Large Cormorant	*Phalacrocorax carbo*	25	Green Bee-eater	*Merops orientalis*
3	Little Egret	*Egretta garzetta*	26	Indian Roller	*Coracias benghalensis*
4	Grey Heron	*Ardea cinerea*	27	Indian Grey Hornbill	*Tockus birostris*
5	Purple Heron	*Ardea purpurea*	28	Barn Swallow	*Hirundo rustica*
6	Eastern Cattle Egret	*Bubulcus coromandus*	29	White-browed Wagtail	*Motacilla maderaspatensis*
7	Indian Pond Heron	*Ardeola grayii*	30	Red-vented Bulbul	*Pycnonotus cafer*
8	Yellow Bittern	*Ixobrychus sinensis*	31	Brown Shrike	*Lanius cristatus*
9	Black Kite	*Milvus migrans*	32	Indian Black Robin	*Saxicoloides fulicatus fulicatus*
10	Grey Francolin	*Francolinus pondicerianus*	33	Ashy Prinia	*Prinia socialis*
11	White-breasted Waterhen	*Amaurornis phoenicurus*	34	Common Tailorbird	*Orthotomus sutorius*
12	Grey-headed Swamphen	*Porphyrio porphyrio*	35	Blyth's Reed Warbler	*Acrocephalus dumetorum*
13	Eurasian Coot	*Fulica atra*	36	Indian (or Clamorous) Reed Warbler	*Acrocephalus brunescens*
14	Red-wattled Lapwing	*Vanellus indicus*	37	Indian Silverbill	*Euodice malabarica*
15	Common Snipe	*Gallinago gallinago*	38	Scaly-breasted Munia	*Lonchura punctulata*
16	River Tern	*Sterna aurantia*	39	House Sparrow	*Passer domesticus*
17	Laughing Dove	*Streptopelia senegalensis*	40	Baya Weaver	*Ploceus philippinus*
18	Spotted Dove	*Streptopelia chinensis*	41	Asian Pied Starling	*Gracupica contra*
19	Rose-ringed Parakeet	*Psittacula krameri*	42	Common Myna	*Acridotheres tristis*
20	Southern Coucal	*Centropus sinensis*	43	Indian Golden Oriole	*Oriolus kundoo*
21	Blue-faced Malkoha	*Phaenicophaeus viridirostris*	44	Black Drongo	*Dicrurus macrocercus*
22	Asian Koel	*Eudynamys scolopacea*	45	House Crow	*Corvus splendens*
23	Asian Palm Swift	*Cypsiurus balasiensis*			

The write-ups made by the school students:



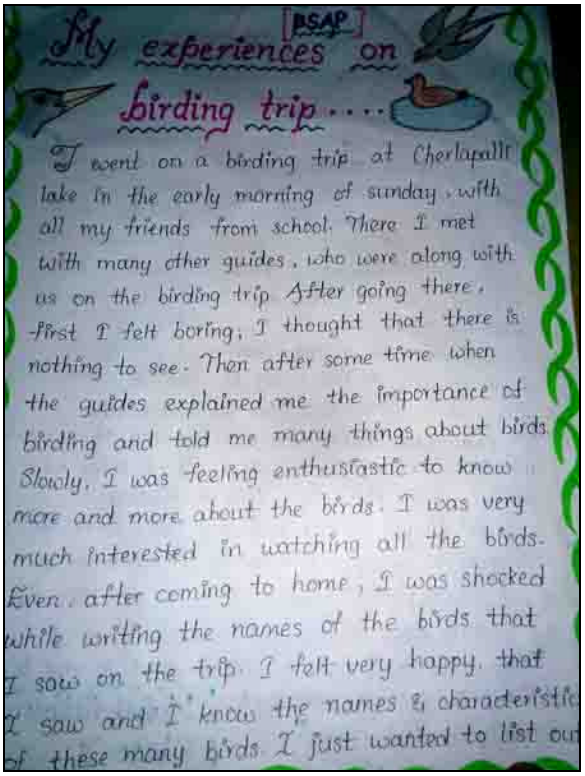
My experiences on [ESAP] birding trip

Hi ! Iam Srisoumya from class-5 we went birding on 18.12.16 with our principal the place we visited is cherlapally lake. In this place we find different birds like cattle egret, purple moken, cormorant, grey heron, pond heron, Eurasian kwoot, Ashyprinea Black drongo etc this are some birds find in this place we know this birds names because of Mr. Shafaat ullah, Mr. Humayun, Mr. R.D. Ramana, Mr. Lawerence, Mrs. Madhuri Mondel this are the people they helped in birding trip and they gave more information about birds. really we enjoyed this trip with birds. i didn't see this birds anywhere when i saw this birds i fell very happy and i felt very excited by this birding trip i came to know that birds are extincting day by day because of different pollution by water pollution the birds donot get enou food and also sound pollution, when we do pollution like Diwali crackers the die and also by plastic covers the injured the birds are very useful to



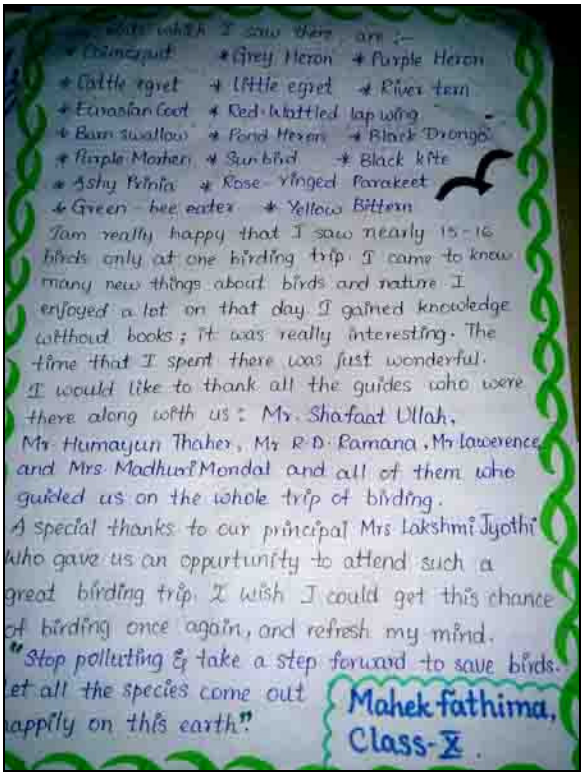
it will eat insects by eating the insects the agricultu- get protected hence we should not harm birds we should always protect the bird this message I learned from this trip really we enjoyed a lot it is a best birding trip if i get another chance to visit definitely i will visit it is a best trip in my life i want to thank all my principal and Sir for keeping this trip

V. Sri Soumya
class-X



My experiences on [BSAP] birding trip....

I went on a birding trip at Cherlapalli lake in the early morning of sunday, with all my friends from school. There I met with many other guides, who were along with us on the birding trip. After going there, first I felt boring, I thought that there is nothing to see. Then after some time when the guides explained me the importance of birding and told me many things about birds. Slowly, I was feeling enthusiastic to know more and more about the birds. I was very much interested in watching all the birds. Even after coming to home, I was shocked while writing the names of the birds that I saw on the trip. I felt very happy that I saw and I know the names & characteristic of these many birds. I just wanted to list out

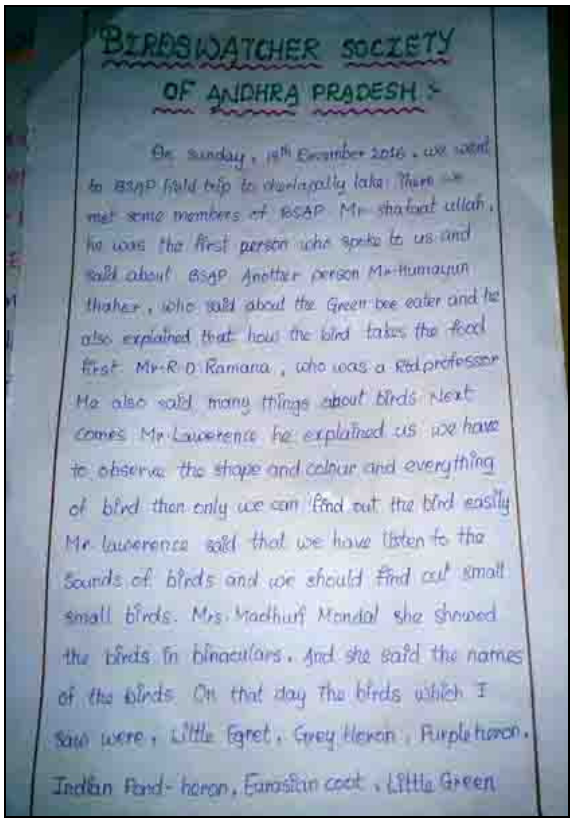


- Cattle egret
- Grey Heron
- Purple Heron
- Little egret
- River tern
- Eurasian Coot
- Red-Wattled lap wing
- Barn swallow
- Pond Heron
- Black Drongo
- Purple Moken
- Sunbird
- Black kite
- Ashy Prinia
- Rose-Ringed Parakeet
- Green-bee eater
- Yellow Bittern

Iam really happy that I saw nearly 15-16 birds only at one birding trip. I came to know many new things about birds and nature I enjoyed a lot on that day. I gained knowledge without books; it was really interesting. The time that I spent there was just wonderful. I would like to thank all the guides who were there along with us: Mr. Shafaat Ullah, Mr. Humayun Thaher, Mr. R.D. Ramana, Mr. Lawerence and Mrs. Madhuri Mondal and all of them who guided us on the whole trip of birding. A special thanks to our principal Mrs. Lakshmi Jyothi who gave us an opportunity to attend such a great birding trip. I wish I could get this chance of birding once again, and refresh my mind.

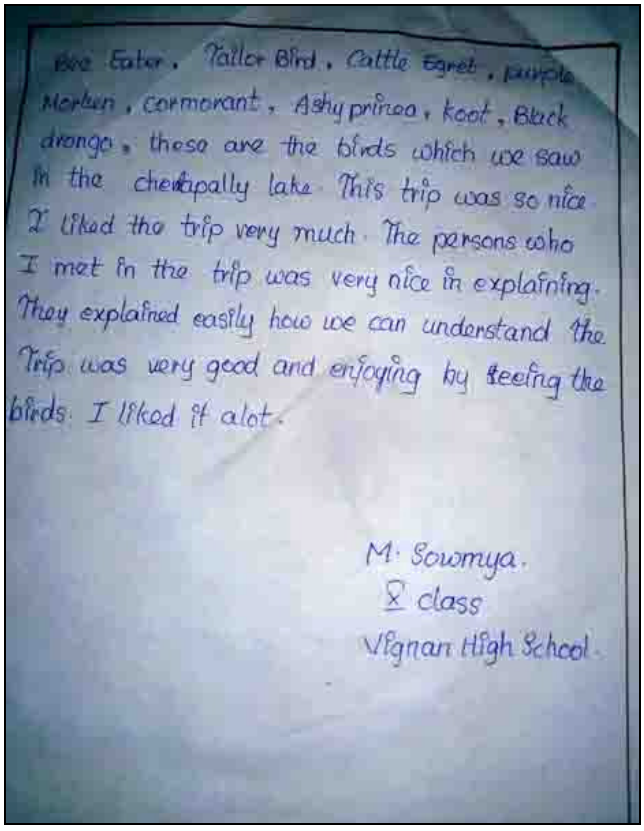
"Stop polluting & take a step forward to save birds. let all the species come out happily on this earth."

Mahek fathima,
Class-X.



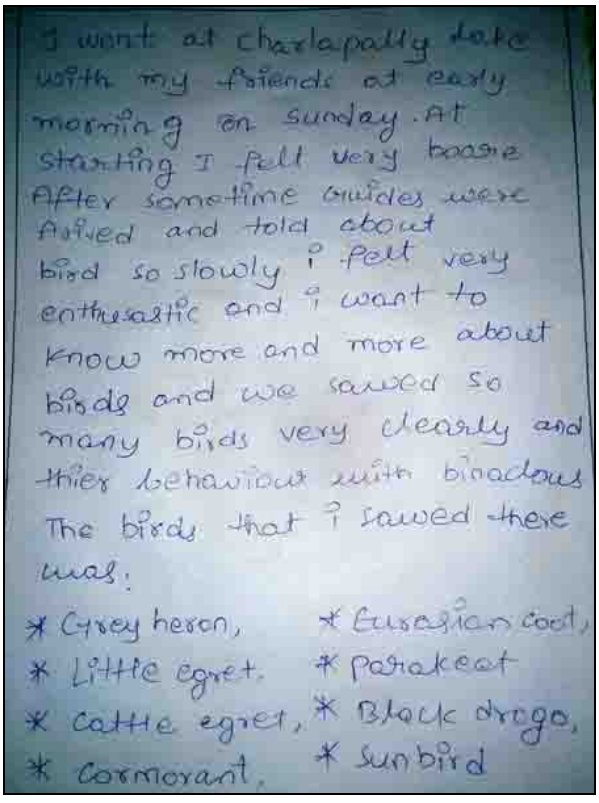
BIRDSWATCHER SOCIETY OF ANDHRA PRADESH :-

On sunday, 18th December 2016, we went to BSAP field trip to cherlapally lake. There we met some members of BSAP. Mr. shafeat ullah, he was the first person who spoke to us and said about BSAP. Another person Mr. Humayun thaher, who said about the Green bee eater and he also explained that how the bird takes the food first. Mr. R. D. Ramana, who was a Rtd professor. He also said many things about birds. Next comes Mr. Laurence he explained us we have to observe the shape and colour and everything of bird then only we can find out the bird easily. Mr. Laurence said that we have listen to the sounds of birds and we should find out small small birds. Mrs. Madhuri Mondal she showed the birds in binaculars. And she said the names of the birds. On that day the birds which I saw were, Little Egret, Grey Heron, Purple heron, Indian Pond-heron, Eurasian coot, Little Green



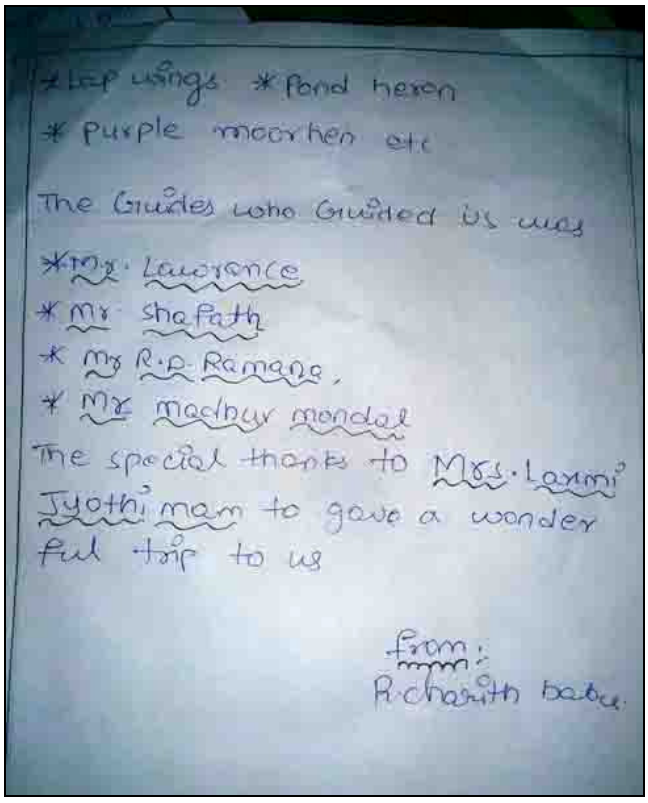
Bee Eater, Tailor Bird, Cattle Egret, Purple Moorhen, Cormorant, Ashy prinea, koot, Black drongo, these are the birds which we saw in the cherlapally lake. This trip was so nice. I liked the trip very much. The persons who I met in the trip was very nice in explaining. They explained easily how we can understand the birds. The trip was very good and enjoying by seeing the birds. I liked it alot.

M. Soumya.
8 class
Vignan High School.



I went at Charlapally lake with my friends at early morning on sunday. At starting I felt very boore After sometime Guides were Arived and told about bird so slowly i felt very enthusastic and i want to know more and more about birds and we sawed so many birds very clearly and thier behaviour with binaculous The birds that i sawed there was:

* Grey heron,
* Little egret.
* cattle egret,
* Cormorant,
* Eurasian coot,
* parakeat
* Black drogo,
* sunbird



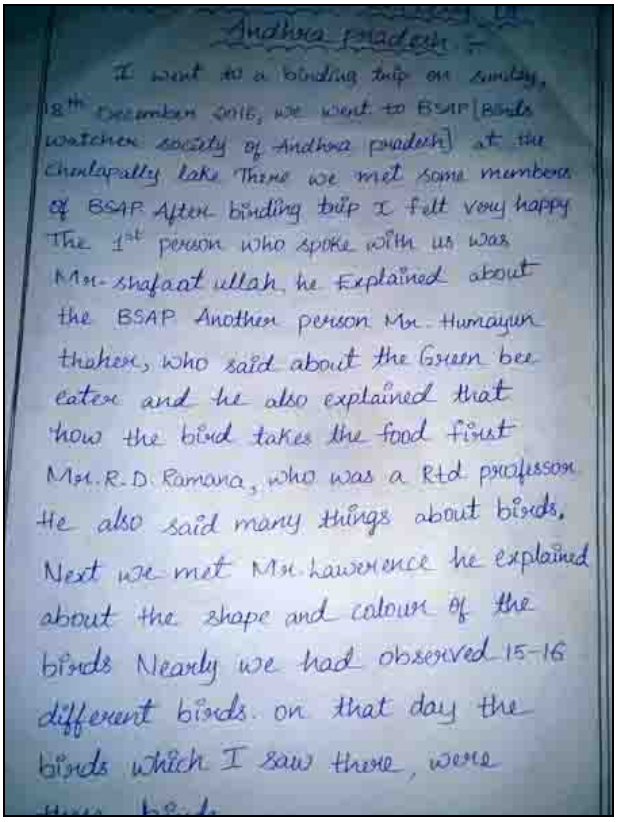
* Leaf wings * Pond heron
* purple moorhen etc

The Guides who Guided us was

* Mr. Laurance
* Mr. shafath
* Mr R.D. Ramana,
* Mr. madhur mondal

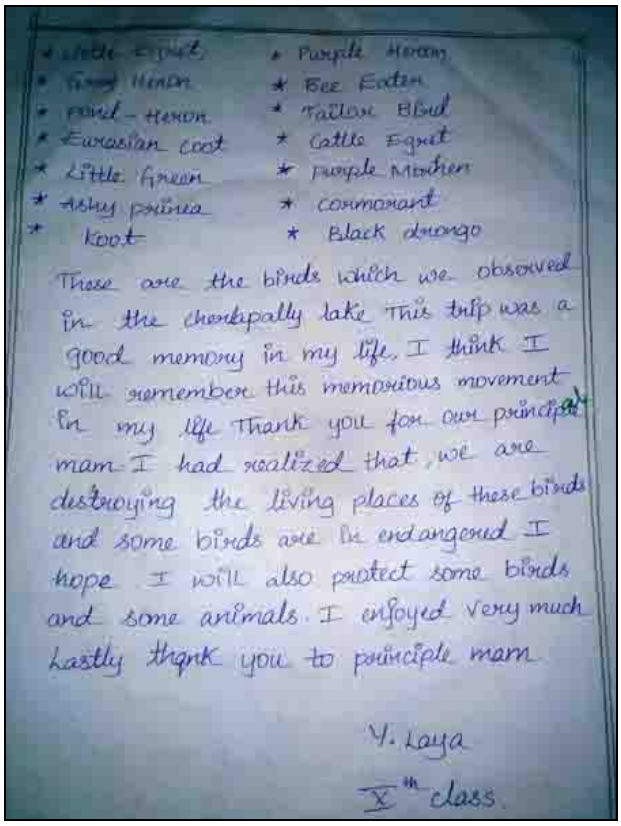
The special thanks to Mrs. Laxmi Jyothi mam to gave a wonder ful trip to us

from:
R. charith babu.



Andhra pradesh :-

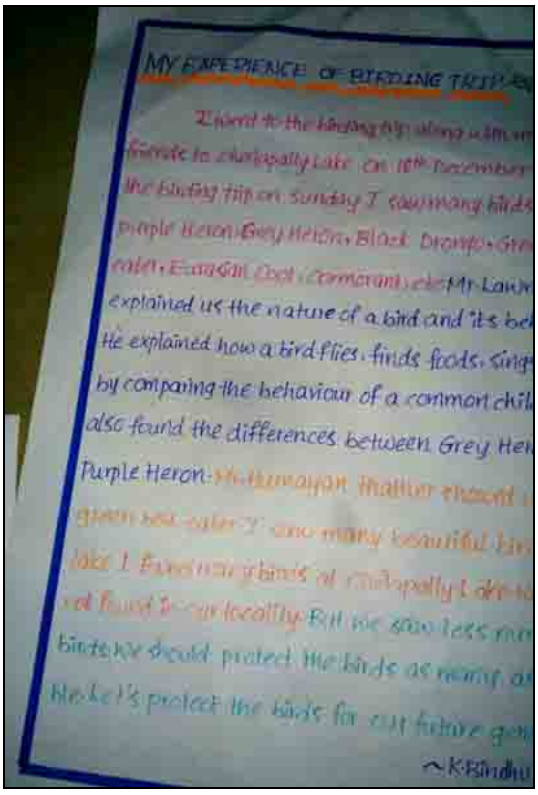
I went to a birding trip on sunday, 18th December 2016, we went to BSAP [Birds watcher society of Andhra pradesh] at the cherlapally lake There we met some members of BSAP After birding trip I felt very happy The 1st person who spoke with us was Mr. shafaat ullah he Explained about the BSAP Another person Mr. Humayun thather, who said about the Green bee eater and he also explained that how the bird takes the food first Mr. R. D. Ramana, who was a Rtd professor He also said many things about birds, Next we met Mr. Lawerence he explained about the shape and colour of the birds Nearly we had observed 15-16 different birds. on that day the birds which I saw there, were



* Little egret
* Grey Heron
* Pond - Heron
* Eurasian coot
* Little Green
* Ashy prinea
* Koot
* Purple Heron
* Bee Eater
* Tailor Bird
* Cattle Egret
* purple Moorhen
* cormorant
* Black drongo

These are the birds which we observed in the cherlapally lake This trip was a good memory in my life, I think I will remember this memorious movement in my life Thank you for our principle mam I had realized that, we are destroying the living places of these birds and some birds are be endangered I hope I will also protect some birds and some animals. I enjoyed very much Lastly thank you to principle mam

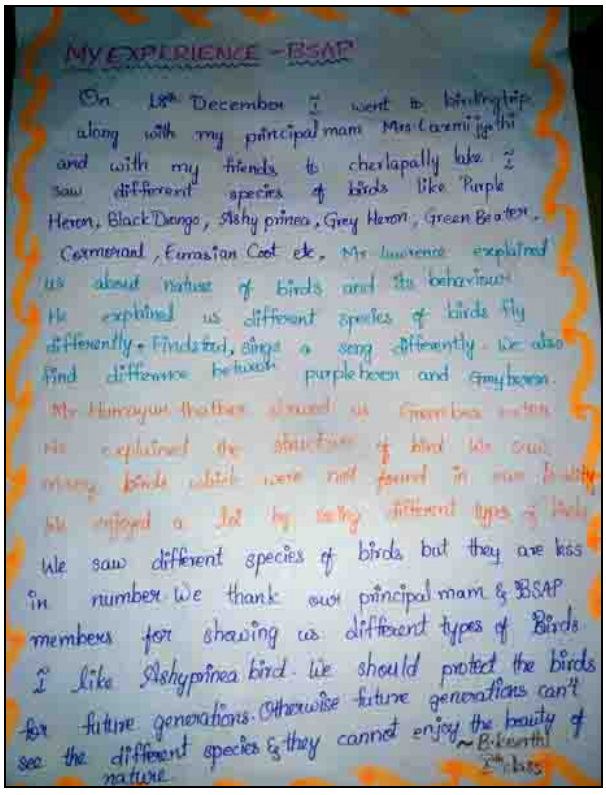
Y. Laya
X th class.



MY EXPERIENCE OF BIRDING TRIP

I went to the birding trip along with my friends to cherlapally Lake on 18th December the birding trip on sunday I saw many birds purple Heron, Grey Heron, Black Drongo, Gre eater, Eurasian Coot, Cormorant etc Mr Lawr explained us the nature of a bird and its be He explained how a bird flies, finds foods, sing by comparing the behaviour of a common chil also found the differences between Grey Her Purple Heron. Mr. Humayun thather showed green bee eater. I saw many beautiful bir lake I saw many birds at cherlapally Lake found 3 - 4 locally But we saw less nu birds we should protect the birds as mamy a like let's protect the birds for our future ge

~K. Bindhu



MY EXPERIENCE - BSAP

On 18th December I went to birdingtrip along with my principal mam Mrs Laxmi jyothi and with my friends to cherlapally lake I saw different species of birds like Purple Heron, Black Drongo, Ashy prinea, Grey Heron, Green Beater, Cormorant, Eurasian Coot etc, Mr Lawrence explained us about nature of birds and its behaviour He explained us different species of birds fly differently. Finds food, sings a song differently. We also find difference between purple heron and Grey heron. Mr Humayun thather showed us Green bee eater. He explained the structure of bird We saw many birds which were not found in our locality We enjoyed a lot by seeing different types of birds We saw different species of birds but they are less in number We thank our principal mam & BSAP members for showing us different types of Birds I like Ashyprinea bird. We should protect the birds for future generations. Otherwise future generations can't see the different species & they cannot enjoy the beauty of nature.

~B. Keerthi
5th class

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Bird of the Month

Text and photos: Umesh Mani

Grey Bushchat (*Saxicola ferreus*)

Grey Bushchat male (L) and female (R) (Chopta, Uttarakhand, 12-10-2016)

Order: Passeriformes
Family: Muscicapidae
Genus: *Saxicola*
Species: *S. ferreus*
Size: 15 cm

Description & distribution: The Grey Bushchat, also known as the Dark Grey or Iron Grey Bushchat, is a resident breeder in the Himalayas and North-eastern Indian hills, and winters south in the North Indian plains. It is distributed from North-western Pakistan east across North India to South-central and South-eastern China, Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia, Thailand, Myanmar and West Malaysia. The male has dark grey to almost black upperparts (depending on the extent of wear) with streaked black wing coverts, whitish underparts with a dull grey breast and flanks, a solid white supercilium, white outer tail feathers and a white throat. The female also shows a muted white or buff supercilium and white throat, but the upperparts are rufous-brown with a rusty rump and outer tail feathers, and the underparts are yellowish-brown. Ear coverts are dark brown. The juvenile is similar to the female, but with spotting that is marked on the head and mantle, and less pronounced on the neck and breast.

Habitat & behaviour: The Grey Bushchat is usually seen alone or in pairs, and tends to keep to open country and scrub, forest edges, cultivation etc. Its preferred habitat is tropical or sub-tropical, moist montane or lowland forest. It favours a perch on top of bushes or poles, flying to the ground on spotting an insect; while sitting, it flicks its tail often. Its diet consists mainly of insects like beetles, grasshoppers, and spiders; it also takes small molluscs and, sometimes, seeds. The usual calls are a sharp *tak tak* and a softer *zee chunk*.

Nesting: The Grey Bushchat breeds mainly between March and July; its nest is a shallow cup made of grass, moss and fine roots, and lined with fibrous material, hair, leaves, fur, feathers etc. The usual clutch consists of 4 to 5 pale to deeper blue, slightly glossy eggs.

Local name: The Grey Bushchat is known as *'sarrak chak pho'* in Lepcha.

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Editors: Shanti Mani, Umesh Mani **Email:** bsap.pitta@gmail.com

For information, write to: Birdwatchers' Society of Andhra Pradesh, PO Box 45, Banjara Hills, Hyderabad – 500034. **E-group:** http://groups.google.co.in/group/bsap_online. **Website:** www.bsap.in. **Society membership** (in Rs.): Annual: 500 per annum; Student: 200 per annum; Corporate: 2000 per annum; Life: 3000. (*Add Rs 75 for outstation cheques.)*